

Message Text

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DEPT PLEASE REPEAT AS APPROPRIATE

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: TSPA, SCUL, ML

SUBJECT: SEX EDUCATION SEMINAR

1. LAST WEEK WAS REMARKABLE PERIOD IN BAMA KO. TWO GROUND- BREAKING AND WELL- PUBLICIZED SEMINARS HELD HERE; FIRST AFRICAN SEMINAR ON USE OF SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS COVERED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF 7 AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND JOINTLY SPONSORED BY USA AND MALIAN GOVERNMENTS; AND THE FIRST - AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE - WEST AFRICAN SEMINAR ON SEX EDUCATION. THIS IS ALSO SPONSORED BY GOM, BUT WAS ORGANIZED BY AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE AND FINANCED BY FORD FOUNDATION. ORGANIZER IS AFSC' S DAKAR REPRESENTATIVE, SWISS POPULATION EXPERT, PIERRE PRADERVAND. TWO WEEK SEMINAR BEING ATTENDED FIFTY MEN AND WOMEN MOSTLY CIVIL SERVANTS AND TEACHERS -- FROM 11 AFRICAN FRENCH- SPEAKING COUNTRIES (CONGO, GABON, CAMEROON, CHAD, DAHOMEY, TOGO, UPPER VOLTA, MALI, IVORY COAST, GUINEA AND SENEGAL). NIGER AND MAURITANIA GOVERNMENTS ASKED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES BUT DIDN' T. MALI HAS DELEGATION OF 10, WHICH INCLUDES TOP SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS, DOCTORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF WOMEN' S GROUPS.

2. HITHERTO TABOU SUBJECTS COVERED IN DISCUSSIONS OF THIS SEMINAR GIVEN VERY FRANK COVERAGE IN L' ESSOR, BAMA KO' S ONLY
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NEWSPAPER. PRADERVAND SAYS TALKS HAVE SO FAR COVERED SEXUAL CUSTOMS OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED, AFRICAN WOMEN'S VIEWS OF SEX, TRADITIONAL AFRICAN CONTRACEPTIVE PRACTICES AND MODERN CONTRACEPTIVE TECHNIQUES, SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN CHILD, AND NEW INSIGHTS ON PHYSIOLOGY OF SEX AND REPRODUCTION. MOST TALKS GIVEN BY AFRICAN SPECIALISTS AND HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED BY SPIRITED AND OUTSPOKEN DISCUSSIONS REPRESENTING ALL POINTS OF VIEW FROM LEFT WING DOCTORS TO FEMALE ASSISTANT TO CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP. PRADERVAND SAYS MANY OF THESE EXPERTS HAVE NEVER BEFORE PUBLICLY DISCUSSED THESE SUBJECTS. THIS WEEK SEMINAR WILL BE ORGANIZED IN WORKSHOPS ON WHAT KINDS OF SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOL CHILDREN AND COUPLES BEFORE MARRIAGE, ROLE OF FAMILY, SCHOOL AND PHYSICIAN, AND ROLE OF RADIO, MOTION PICTURES, AND RADIO. SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS ARE BEING TAPED AND WILL BE REPRODUCED BY CANADIAN ICRD (INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT) LATER THIS YEAR. AGREEMENT ALREADY REACHED THAT SEMINAR WILL ESTABLISH INFORMAL COMMITTEES WHICH WILL PREPARE AFRICAN- ORIENTED MANUALS ON SEX EDUCATION AND FAMILY PLANNING. GROUP ALSO WANTS TO PRODUCE SEX EDUCATION MOVIE HERE IN MALI; AMBASSADOR TOLD PRADERVAND WE WOULD BE GLAD TO CONSIDER HELPING WITH FINANCING SUCH MOVIES FROM POPULATION SELF- HELP FUNDS. NEXT WEEK RADIO MALI WILL BEGIN PILOT SERIES OF PROGRAM IN SIX LANGUAGES ON SEX EDUCATION, AND SPONSORS WILL CLOSELY FOLLOW POPULAR REACTION BY VARIOUS AGE, SEX AND TRIBAL GROUPS.

3. TO TOP OFF CALENDER, AFSC AND FORD FOUNDATION ARE ORGANIZING 10 DAY SEMINAR ON FAMILY PLANNING TO BE SPONSORED BY MALIAN TRADE UNIONS. SEMINAR WILL BE ATTENDED BY ROUGHLY 50 MEN AND WOMEN UNION LEADERS WHO WILL IN TURN ORGANIZE SEMINARS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. TWO REPRESENTATIVES EACH FROM TRADE UNIONS IN SENEGAL, GUINEA, AND MAURITANIA WILL ALSO ATTEND.

4. AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED AT LENGTH WITH PRADERVAND MALI'S NASCENT PROGRAM FOR SEX EDUCATION AND ITS VERY DISCREET BUT INCREASINGLY GOOD FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM. PRADERVAND SAYS MALI'S PROGRAM IS MOST SOPHISTICATED AND WELL CONCEIVED PROGRAM IN AFRICA. UNLIKE MOST OTHER AFRICAN PROGRAMS, MALI'S PROGRAM IS COMPLETELY RUN BY TOP- LEVEL MALIANS (PRODUCTION MINISTER COULIBALY IS HEAD OF " UNOFFICIAL" FAMILY PLANNING ORGANIZATION).(MALIANS DECIDE PRIORITIES. THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED SMALL CLINIC

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AND HAVE ALREADY TRAINED DOCTORS AND MIDWIVES WHO HAVE MUCH BROADER REACH. HOWEVER, MOST IMPRESSIVE PART OF PROGRAM IS RESEARCH BEING CARRIED ON INTO SEX PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES, AND APPLICABILITY ADVANCED TECHNIQUES TO VARIOUS PARTS MALIAN SOCIETY.

5. COMMENT: TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE

BEEN POSSIBLE. STEADY BUT DISCREET PRESSURE ON MALI' S MILITARY COMMITTEE FROM WORLD- WIDE FAMILY PLANNING GROUPS, AIDED NOT INCONSIDERABLY BY THIS EMBASSY, BROUGHT BREAK- THROUGH YEAR AGO WHEN GOM AUTHORIZED FORMATION MALIAN FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION AND ASKED ICRD TO ESTABLISH RESEARCH PROGRAM AND PILOT CLINIC. TO ICRD' S ANDRE LA PLANTE, A VERY TALENTED CANADIAN ANTHROPOLOGIST HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN WORKING WITH MALIANS, HOWEVER, BELONGS LION' S SHARE OF CREDIT FOR PROGRESS MADE TO DATE. LA PLANTE UNDERSTANDS IMPORTANCE OF PROCEEDING SLOWLY, WITHOUT PUBLICITY, AND ONLY AS MALIANS THEMSELVES READY TO MOVE AHEAD, IT HASN' T BEEN - AND WON' T BE - EASY. LAST WEEK MALIAN PROGRAM AND LA PLANTE DENOUNCED VIRULENTLY ON RADIO MALI BY MALIAN CATHOLIC PRIEST FATHER DAVID TRAORE AS TOOLS OF WESTERN IMPERIALISTS INTERESTED IN GENOCIDE OF AFRICANS. PRADERVAND THINKS THIS ATTACK MADE PRECISELY BECAUSE OF SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS MADE BY MALIAN GROUP. WE ARE IN PERIODIC DISCREET CONTACT WITH MALIAN ORGANIZATION AND LA PLANTE AND HAVE REITERATED OFFER TO BE OF HELP WHENEVER NEEDED. PRINCIPAL AMERICAN ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO DATE WAS IN FORM OF COMMODITIES DONATED TO ICRD THROUGH PATHFINDER FUND. BLAKE

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